

CHAPTER 5

THE WITNESSES' POSITION ON THE "LAST DAYS" AND ARMAGEDDON: AN ILLUSION OF URGENCY

The *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* of July 21, 1969 carried an article with the headline: "ARMAGEDDON DUE IN 70's, WITNESSES TOLD." The paper went on to report:

Armageddon—The end of the world for all but the Jehovah's Witnesses—is just around the corner, according to Watchtower Society president Nathan H. Knorr who addressed 81,032 Witnesses in the stands and on the playing field yesterday at Dodger Stadium.

Although he did not pinpoint the predicted date, Knorr did narrow it down to the "mid-seventies." The year 1975 has been specifically mentioned in Witness publications.

A spokesman for the Witnesses conceded that they are not as "dogmatic and definite" about the 1975 prediction as they were in proclaiming Armageddon's supposed arrival in 1925.

The significance of 1975 was first stressed in the release on June 25, 1966 of the new book, *Life Everlasting—in Freedom of the Sons of God*:

... Six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 C.E. . . . It would not be by mere chance or accident . . . for the reign of Jesus Christ . . . to run parallel with the seventh millennium of man's existence.¹

The date was also emphasized in the *Awake!* of October 8, 1966 in an article entitled, "How Much Longer Will It Be?" (pp. 17-20) The front cover of the October 8, 1968 *Awake!* carries the words: "IS IT LATER THAN YOU THINK?" and in smaller print, "Is time running out for this generation? What

¹ (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1966), pp. 29, 30.

will the 1970's bring?" In the treatment of the subject in the magazine, it ends with the warning:

You have no time to lose in making friends with God, because time is rapidly running out for this wicked system of things. It is very close to plunging into the chasm of Armageddon. Therefore, take steps quickly to work for survival and for eternal life in God's new order.²

It is obvious that the Witnesses and all those who read or study their writings come under a constant pressure of urgency and the reminder that "Armageddon is just around the corner." It is the purpose of this chapter to show that the stress on the "last days" and the threat of Armageddon have been used first by Russell and Rutherford, and then by the Watchtower Society to create an *illusion* of urgency. If anything has been proven over the past more than ninety years, it is that these prophets are certainly false ones—their words have fallen "to the earth" (I Sam. 3:19 NWT; See Deut. 18:20-22).

The statements which have been made over the years in illustration of the above conclusions are presented chronologically in the following development. Similar statements for other years have been located and could be quoted, but those which have been used should suffice.

I. 1877-1899

The following is stated in *Three Worlds*:

THE END OF THIS WORLD; that is, the end of the *gospel* and the beginning of the *millennial* age is nearer than most men suppose; indeed we have already entered the transition period, which is to be a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" (Dan. 12:1).³

The nations are perplexed, and are preparing for a terrible struggle; huge engines of war are being multiplied by land and sea; millions of men are under arms, and still their numbers are increased, while the people are becoming desperate and alarmed.

When the struggle begins, as soon it must, a ball will be set in motion before which "all the kingdoms of the world, that are upon the face of the earth, shall be thrown down;" and, according to Scripture, one wild scene of desolation and terror will result.⁴

² XLIX, p. 29.

³ Barbour and Russell, *Three Worlds, and the Harvest of this World*, p. 17.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

The January, 1886 *Zion's Watch Tower* began with the observation:

The outlook at the opening of the New Year has some very encouraging features. The outward evidences are that the marshalling of the hosts for the battle of the great day of God Almighty, is in progress while the skirmishing is commencing.

.....
 . . . The *time* is come for Messiah to take the dominion of earth and to overthrow the oppressors and corrupters of the earth, (Rev. 19:15 and 11:17, 18) preparatory to the establishment of everlasting peace upon the only firm foundation of righteousness and truth.⁵

In the 1889 publication, *The Time Is at Hand*, the pre-1914 interpretation of prophecy is set forth:

Be not surprised, then, when in subsequent chapters we present proofs that the setting up of the Kingdom of God is already begun, that it is pointed out in prophecy as due to begin the exercise of power in A.D. 1878, and that the "battle of the great day of God Almighty" (Rev. 16:14.), which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's present rulership, is already commenced. The gathering of the armies is plainly visible from the standpoint of God's Word.⁶

In the observations to open the year 1894 in *Zion's Watch Tower* the reader is informed that "worldly people not only see the great 'battle' approaching, but they see the skirmishing is already beginning all along the line . . ."⁷

In the July 15, 1894 *Zion's Watch Tower*, under the heading "CAN IT BE DELAYED UNTIL 1914?" Russell wrote:

Seventeen years ago people said, concerning the time features presented in MILLENNIAL DAWN, They seem reasonable in many respects, but surely no such radical changes could occur between now and the close of 1914: if you had proved that they would come about in a century or two, it would seem much more probable.

What changes have since occurred, and what velocity is gained daily? "The old is quickly passing and the new is coming in."

Now, in view of recent labor troubles and threatened anarchy, our readers are writing to know if there may not be a mistake in the 1914

⁵ *Watch Tower Reprints*, I, p. 817.

⁶ p. 101. The 1915 edition of this text changed the "A.D. 1914" to read "A.D. 1915."

⁷ *Watch Tower Reprints*, II (January 1, 1894), p. 1605.

date. They say that they do not see how present conditions can hold out so long under the strain.

We see no reason for changing the figures—nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God's dates, not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the *beginning*, but for the *end* of the time of trouble.⁸

II. 1900-1919

In 1904 Russell stressed the importance of 1910-1912:

According to our expectations the stress of the great time of trouble will be on us soon, somewhere between 1910 and 1912—culminating with the end of the “Times of the Gentiles,” October, 1914.

The beginning of the severity of the trouble is not distinctly marked in the Scriptures, and is rather conjectural. We infer that so great a trouble, so world-wide a catastrophe, could scarcely be accomplished in less than three years, and that if it lasted much more than three years “no flesh would be saved.”⁹

A number of statements Russell made in 1914, 1915 and 1916 in reference to Armageddon and the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom are significant.

May 1, 1914.

There is absolutely no ground for Bible students to question that the consummation of this Gospel age is now even at the door, and that it will end as the Scriptures foretell in a great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. We see the participants in this great crisis banding themselves together The great crisis, the great clash, symbolically represented as a fire, that will consume the ecclesiastical heavens and the social earth, is very near.¹⁰

September 1, 1914.

While it is possible that Armageddon may begin next Spring, yet it is purely speculation to attempt to say just when. We see, however, that there are parallels between the close of the Jewish age and this Gospel age. These parallels seem to point to the year just before us—particularly the early months.¹¹

⁸ *Watch Tower Reprints*, II, p. 1677.

⁹ *The New Creation* (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1904), p. 579.

¹⁰ *Watch Tower Reprints*, VI (May 1, 1914), p. 5450.

¹¹ *Watch Tower Reprints*, VI (September 1, 1914), p. 5527.

December 14, 1914.

Few of the awakening ones realize that the present war is permitted for the weakening of the nations, preparatory to the utter collapse of the Present Order of things—and the ushering in of the New Order—the Reign of Righteousness, under Messiah's Kingdom.¹²

April 1, 1915.

The Battle of Armageddon, to which this war is leading, will be a great contest between right and wrong, and will signify the complete and everlasting overthrow of the wrong, and the permanent establishment of Messiah's righteous kingdom for the blessing of the world. . . . Our sympathies are broad enough to cover all engaged in the dreadful strife, as our hope is broad enough and deep enough to include all in the great blessings which our Master and his Millennial kingdom are about to bring to the world.¹³

September 1, 1916.

We see no reason for doubting, therefore, that the Times of the Gentiles ended in October, 1914; and that a few more years will witness their utter collapse and the full establishment of God's kingdom in the hands of Messiah.¹⁴

Sometime during the War.

The present great war in Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the Scriptures. (Rev. 16:16-20.) It will eventuate in the complete overthrow of all the systems of error which have so long oppressed the people of God and deluded the world. . . . We believe the present war cannot last much longer until revolution shall break out.¹⁵

The Finished Mystery stated to be the “POSTHUMOUS WORK OF PASTOR RUSSELL” (p. 2) applies the events formerly scheduled to come in 1914 and before, to the period of 1918-1925. When some of the explanations given in the first edition did not transpire as predicted, a later edition (the edition used was dated 1926) altered the statements and dates. Quotations from this volume with changes noted are given without comment.

. . . The Spring of 1918 will bring upon Christendom a spasm of

¹² *New York Times*, December 14, 1914, p. 6.

¹³ *Watch Tower Reprints*, VI (April 1, 1915), p. 5659.

¹⁴ *Watch Tower Reprints*, VI (September 1, 1916), p. 5950.

¹⁵ C. T. Russell, *Pastor Russell's Sermons*, p. 676.

anguish greater even than that experienced in the Fall of 1914. . . . The travail that is coming is to be upon nominal Zion—"Christendom," "Babylon"; and it will be a great and sore affliction—"A Time of Trouble such as was not since there was a nation." (p. 62)

As the fleshly-minded apostates from Christianity, siding with the radicals and revolutionaries, will rejoice at the inheritance of desolation that will be Christendom's after 1918, so will God do to the successful revolutionary movement; it shall be utterly desolated, "even all of it." Not one vestige of it shall survive the ravages of world-wide all-embracing anarchy, in the fall of 1920. (Rev. 11:7-13) [The 1926 ed. reads: "in the end of the time of trouble."] (p. 542)

Pastor Russell's mission, in large part, was to advise Christendom of its impending end, in the time of world-wide trouble. It is the Divine judgment upon the nations. . . . There will be no chance of escaping from destruction, through the nations. . . . The trouble is due to the dawning of the Day of Christ, the Millennium. It is the Day of Vengeance, which began in the world war of 1914 and which will break like a furious morning storm in 1918.—Lam. 4:18. (p. 404)

Some interesting developments in connection with the setting up of the Kingdom may occur in 1920, six years after the great Time of Trouble began. It would not be strange if this were so, when we recall that after forty years wandering in the wilderness the Israelites came into possession of the land of Canaan after a further six years. As these matters are still future we can but wait to see. We anticipate that the "earthquake" will occur early in 1918, and that the "fire" will come in the fall of 1920. [Comments on Revelation 11:13. The 1926 ed. reads: "and that the 'fire' will follow in due course."] (p. 178)

This vision of the prophet Ezekiel depicts the established theocratic Kingdom of God on earth, civil and religious, spiritual and earthly. . . . The Temple . . . is a type and symbol of "better things to come," after the wars, revolutions and anarchy of the period from 1914 to 1925 have passed. [The 1926 ed. reads: "of the time of trouble have passed."] (p. 569)¹⁶

On February 24, 1918 Judge Rutherford "delivered for the first time the lecture that later became entitled 'Millions Now Living Will Never Die.'" ¹⁷ This was followed by a "Millions Now Living Will Never Die" campaign from 1918-1921 and a book by the same title.¹⁸ The stage was being set for the new emphasis on 1925.

¹⁶ Clayton J. Woodworth and George H. Fisher (eds.), (Brooklyn: People's Pulpit Association, 1917).

¹⁷ *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, p. 76.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

III. 1920-1929

Published late in 1920, Rutherford's *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* booklet and the campaign which promoted it, created quite a stir. The essence of this new stress was that the Kingdom would be set up in 1925.

Based upon the argument heretofore set forth, then, that the old order of things, the old world, is ending and is therefore passing away, and that the new order is coming in, and that 1925 shall mark the resurrection of the faithful worthies of old and the beginning of reconstruction, it is reasonable to conclude that millions of people now on the earth will be still on the earth in 1925. Then, based upon the promises set forth in the divine Word, we must reach the positive and indisputable conclusion that millions now living will never die.¹⁹

After the quotation and explanation of Isaiah 35:10, Rutherford looked to the immediate future:

This is the Golden Age of which the prophets prophesied and of which the Psalmist sang; and it is the privilege of the student of the divine Word today, by the eye of faith, to see that we are standing at the very portals of that blessed time! Let us look up and lift up our heads. Deliverance is at the door!²⁰

The booklet and the campaign made many new converts, but as 1925 approached Rutherford became less sure of his predictions and by early 1925 he had acknowledged the failure of his expectations.²¹

In 1929, with the publication of *Life*, attention was switched from the 1925 failure to a new issue. The premise of this new book was that the time of the end was very close because the Jews were returning to Palestine.

If the end of 1925 marks the end of the last fifty-year period, then it follows that we should expect the people to begin to receive some knowledge concerning God's great plan of restoration. The Jews are to have the favors first, and thereafter all others who obey the Lord.²²

¹⁹ (Brooklyn: International Bible Students Association, 1920), p. 97.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

²¹ Timothy White, *A People for His Name* (New York: Vantage Press, 1967), p. 194.

²² (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society), p. 170.

That the return of the Jews to God's favor means the time when God will extend the privileges of life to the people, both the dead and the living, is shown by the words written [quotes Romans 11:15, 16]²³

That foreshadowed God's purpose now to shortly dash to pieces the Devil's organization that controls all the nations of the earth, and then bring peace and prosperity to the people; and all who obey him will be granted life everlasting on the earth.²⁴

The thesis of *Life* was discarded only about a year after its publication.²⁵

The year 1929 witnessed two other testimonies to the soon end of the world. One was the publication of the book *Prophecy*, the other was the building of "Beth Sarim" ("House of the Princes") in San Diego. In *Prophecy* Rutherford stated: "Satan knows that shortly he must fight the Lord, and therefore he prepares for the conflict."²⁶ In concluding the chapter on Armageddon the shortness of the time was again stressed:

By the proclaiming of the doings of Jehovah and his purposes the people may now know the meaning of the present-day events, and what shall shortly come to pass, and what will be for their good.²⁷

"Beth Sarim" was built to provide a place to which the "princes," Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others might return just before the closing events of the end. The *San Diego Sun* of March 15, 1930 reported,

The seven famous men will not have long to rest at their San Diego estate because they soon will lead the forces of the Lord to vanquish the minions of Satan at the Battle of Armageddon, Rutherford believes.

"Beth Sarim" was sold by the Society in 1948.

IV. 1930-1939

The decade, 1930-1939, saw the abandoning of specific date setting, but readers of the Watchtower material were assured

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 332.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 346, 347.

²⁵ W. J. Schnell, *Thirty Years a Watch Tower Slave* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), pp. 90, 91.

²⁶ (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1929), p. 266.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

that the Battle of Armageddon was near. Rutherford explained the new position for this period:

There was a measure of disappointment on the part of Jehovah's faithful ones on earth concerning the years 1914, 1918 and 1925, which disappointment lasted for a time. Later the faithful learned that these dates were definitely fixed in the Scriptures; and they also learned to quit fixing dates for the future and predicting what would come to pass on a certain date, but to rely (and they do rely) upon the Word of God as to the events that must come to pass.²⁸

In *Light*, Volume II, Rutherford wrote, "The great climax is at hand. The kings of earth now set themselves against his anointed Stone."²⁹ A year later, the first of three volumes of *Vindication* appeared, in which Rutherford warned:

God's kingdom has begun to operate. His day of vengeance is here, and Armageddon is at hand and certain to fall upon Christendom, and that within an early date. God's judgment is upon Christendom and must shortly be executed.³⁰

In his study on the Jehovah's Witnesses, Herbert H. Stroup commented on the continuing importance of the theme of the booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, even in the early 1930's:

The theme of the booklet was so rich an energizer of his followers and so compelling an idea in itself that even as late as 1932 Mr. Rutherford was still delivering talks upon it. In that year he declared that the religious work of the Witnesses was "coming to a conclusion," that the end was "only a short time away," and that the end was "much less than the length of a generation."³¹

The book *Salvation* (1939) also stressed the nearness of Armageddon:

The abundance of Scriptural evidence, together with the physical facts that have come to pass showing the fulfillment of prophecy, conclusively proves that the time for the battle of the great day of God Almighty is very near and that in that battle all of God's enemies shall be destroyed and the earth cleared of wickedness³²

²⁸ *Vindication* (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1931), I, pp. 338, 339.

²⁹ (Brooklyn: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1930), II, p. 327.

³⁰ I, p. 147.

³¹ *The Jehovah's Witnesses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), p. 55.

³² J. F. Rutherford, (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1939), p. 310.

Likewise today, all the nations and peoples of earth are face to face with the greatest emergency. They are being warned as God commands, that the disaster of Armageddon is just ahead.³³

V. 1940-1949

Rutherford's book *Religion* concluded with the chapter "End of Religion" in which he wrote:

The prophecies of Almighty God, the fulfillment of which now clearly appears from the physical facts, show that the end of religion has come and with its end the complete downfall of Satan's entire organization.³⁴

... The day for final settlement is near at hand.³⁵

The year 1940 seemed to be very close to the termination of this "system of things" for Rutherford wrote the following in *The Watchtower*:

The witness work for THE THEOCRACY appears to be about done in most of the countries of "Christendom." ...

... Now the totalitarian rule has suppressed the Theocratic message, and it should be expected that when they quit fighting amongst themselves all the totalitarian rulers will turn their attention to the complete suppression of everything pertaining to the THEOCRATIC GOVERNMENT.

What, then, does it mean that the THEOCRATIC GOVERNMENT is now suppressed in many nations? It means that the hour is rapidly approaching when the "sign" of Armageddon will be clearly revealed and all who are on the side of Jehovah will see and appreciate it.³⁶

Herbert Stroup reported the following incident which occurred shortly before Christmas in 1940. "The wife declared that she would never again celebrate Christmas, but added with a shrug of her shoulders, 'I should worry. The kingdom may be here before Christmas.'"³⁷

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 361.

³⁴ (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1940), p. 336.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

³⁶ *The Watchtower*, LXI (September 1, 1940), p. 265.

White (p. 335), quotes from the *1942 Yearbook* (p. 29), completed by Rutherford just before his death: "The record as herewith published would, on the face of it, show that the Theocratic witness work on earth is about done."

³⁷ P. 142.

In Rutherford's book *Children*, the touching story of two young Jehovah's Witnesses is told. John twenty and Eunice eighteen, who are deeply in love, decided that their marriage should be postponed until after Armageddon and the impending establishment of the Kingdom. John is made to say:

Armageddon is surely near, and during that time the Lord will clean off the earth everything that offends and is disagreeable. . . . From now on we shall have our heart devotion fixed on THE THEOCRACY, knowing that soon we shall journey forever together in the earth. Our hope is that within a few years our marriage may be consummated and, by the Lord's grace, we shall have sweet children that will be an honor to the Lord. We can well defer our marriage until lasting peace comes to the earth.³⁸

The publication of *The New World*, the first book after Rutherford's death, continued to carry the theme of the closeness of the end and the soon to be realized new world:

... THE NEW WORLD IS AT THE DOORS. . . . The time is short. Those who do not inform themselves and who do not now choose the new world which Higher Powers shall establish will never live to enter into blessings and glories.³⁹

In 1943 the book *The Truth Shall Make You Free* warned:

The final war will come as a most sudden and complete surprise. . . . Nevertheless, the appearing of the "desolating abomination in the holy place" is an unerring proof that the unknown day and hour of the beginning of the final war is dangerously near.⁴⁰

It was in the same book that the first revised chronology since Russell's was published. Russell's chronology made the 6,000 years since Adam's creation run out in 1872. The new chronology had the same period run out in 1972. The chapter titled "The Count of Time," concluded: "We are therefore near the end of six thousand years of human history, with conditions upon us and tremendous events at hand foreshadowed by those of Noah's day.—Luke 17:26-30."⁴¹

That this new chronology did establish in the minds of many Witnesses a new date for when Armageddon might take place is

³⁸ (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1941), p. 366.

³⁹ (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1942), p. 10.

⁴⁰ P. 341.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

illustrated by the experience of Marcus Bach with the Witnesses, as reported in 1946. Bach asked a Witness why he sacrificed as he did; the reply and the conversation are given:

"Armageddon." "Scheduled for when?" "It should come sometime before 1972." He made it sound so commonplace we might have been talking about the weather. And yet, for him, Armageddon would be life's most portentous event.⁴²

Bach also records an interesting conversation on children and marriage:

"Do you have any children?" His answer was sincere but impersonal. "No, we haven't. We think it is better to wait until after Armageddon." . . . "Is this a belief among the Witnesses," I asked, "or is it just your idea?" "The Society feels that since the time of the end is so near, people can witness more effectively if they do not have too many responsibilities."⁴³

In 1944 the establishment of an "international peace organization" was seen

as one of the most positive evidences that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" and that the end of the world arrangement is now near, Jesus foretold the setting up of that anti-christ organization.⁴⁴

In 1946 it was stated that "the disaster of Armageddon, greater than that which befell Sodom and Gomorrah, is at the door."⁴⁵

VI. 1950-PRESENT

It is not necessary to quote extensively from the writings of the period between 1950-1975 to establish that they too stress the nearness of Armageddon. Several examples of statements should suffice.

⁴² *They Have Found a Faith* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1946), p. 34.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 44. See the same emphasis in the August 7, 1969 issue of *New Society*, p. 201: "Were they planning to have a family out in South America, then? 'No,' said Liz. 'We've decided not to have any children till after Armageddon.'"

⁴⁴ *The Kingdom Is at Hand* (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1944, p. 342.

⁴⁵ *Let God Be True* (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1946), p. 194.

In *This Means Everlasting Life* urgency is stressed:

Every intelligent creature on earth must determine his own destiny. Now at the consummation of this system of things when the judgment of the nations is under way and the separating of the sheep and the goats with opposite destinies is nearing a conclusion, yes, now is the urgent time to make your determination.⁴⁶

The march is on! Where? To the field of Armageddon for the "war of the great day of God the Almighty"! God will not hear the unscriptural prayers of all the religious clergy combined on "world prayer" days for the sparing of this old world from Armageddon. It is unavoidable, for Jehovah's time has come to settle definitely the issue of universal sovereignty.⁴⁷

According to the observations of ex-witness Stan Thomas, and other authors as well, the 1953 convention of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Yankee Stadium was of special significance:

. . . the Witnesses were warned to expect an all out attack by Satan's forces (the world) in the near future, an event which would be the spark to ignite Armageddon. As to precisely when this attack was to be expected the Watchtower Society has grown much too wise to officially speculate, but many Witnesses, particularly older ones, felt that 1954 could well be "The Year." After all, Russell's "preparatory work" took exactly forty years and ended in 1914. Was it not likely that a further period of forty years, commencing in 1914, would see "the end of all things"?⁴⁸

In 1955 the Witnesses were told that "in the light of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy it is becoming clear that the war of Armageddon is nearing its breaking-out point."⁴⁹

It was stated in 1963 that "it does no good to use Bible chronology for speculating on dates that are still future in the stream of time.—Matt. 24:36."⁵⁰ Yet the year 1966 saw just such speculation on the basis of viewing the 6,000 year chronology as running out in 1975.

⁴⁶ (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1950), p. 307.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

⁴⁸ *Jehovah's Witnesses and What They Believe* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), pp. 54, 55.

⁴⁹ *You May Survive Armageddon into God's New World* (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1955), p. 331.

⁵⁰ *All Scripture Is Inspired by God and Beneficial* (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1963), p. 286. See also the contrast between how Matthew 24:36 is viewed here and in *The Watchtower* issue of August 15, 1968, pp. 500, 501.

What cataclysmic times are fast approaching! A climax in man's history is at the door! How vital, then, for each one who loves life to take note of these evidences of history that point to the near end of this wicked system!⁵¹

In conclusion, a quotation from a 1969 *Watchtower*, typical of the statements down to the present, warns: "There is only a short time left before Jehovah will destroy this wicked system of things."⁵² Armageddon could occur anytime now.

VII. CONCLUSION

It was the purpose of this chapter to show that the stress on the "last days" and the threat of Armageddon have been used first by Russell and Rutherford, and then by the Watchtower Society, to create an *illusion* of urgency. This illusion has kept the followers of the Society active and brought many new converts into the movement. The latest stress on 1975 has had its results in growth, for in 1970 there were 164,193 baptisms of new converts.⁵³ This number represents almost twice the number of baptisms just two years before when 82,842 were reported.⁵⁴ Even larger growth figures were recorded in the following years.

By way of conclusion, a chronological listing of statements excerpted from the quotations in this chapter is given. All of the pronouncements, except those with an asterisk (*), reflect the official Watchtower position at the time they were made.⁵⁵

Year	Statement
1877	"THE END OF THIS WORLD . . . is nearer than most men suppose"
1886	"Marshalling of the hosts for the battle of the great day of

⁵¹ *Awake!*, XLVII (October 8, 1966), p. 20.

⁵² XC (January 15, 1969), p. 39.

⁵³ *The Watchtower*, XCII (January 1, 1971), p. 29.

⁵⁴ *The Watchtower*, XC (January 1, 1969), p. 25.

⁵⁵ Ellipses at the beginning and ending of the quotations are not employed.

God Almighty, is in progress while the skirmishing is commencing"

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| 1889 | "The 'battle of the great day of God Almighty' . . . which will end in A.D. 1914 . . . is already commenced" |
| 1894 | "The skirmishing is already beginning all along the line" "The end of 1914 is not the date for the <i>beginning</i> , but for the <i>end</i> of the time of trouble" |
| 1904 | "The stress of the great time of trouble will be on us soon, somewhere between 1910 and 1912—culminating . . . October 1914" |
| 1914 | "The great crisis, the great clash . . . is very near" "Armageddon may begin next spring" |
| 1915 | "The Battle of Armageddon, to which this war is leading" |
| 1915? | "The present great war in Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the Scriptures" |
| 1917 | "We anticipate that the 'earthquake' will occur early in 1918, and that the 'fire' will come in the fall of 1920" |
| 1920 | Emphasis on 1925: "The old order of things, the old world, is ending" "We are standing at the very portals of that blessed time!" (Golden Age of the Kingdom) "Deliverance is at the door!" |
| 1929 | "God's purpose now to shortly dash to pieces the Devil's organization" "Satan knows that shortly he must fight the Lord" |
| 1930 | "The great climax is at hand" |
| 1931 | "His day of vengeance is here, and Armageddon is at hand" "God's judgment . . . must shortly be executed" |
| 1932* | The end was "only a short time away" |
| 1939 | "The time for the battle of the great day of God Almighty is very near" "The disaster of Armageddon is just ahead" |
| 1940 | "The day for final settlement is near at hand" "The witness work for THE THEOCRACY appears to be about done" |

- 1941 "Armageddon is surely near . . . soon . . . within a few years"
- 1942 "THE NEW WORLD IS AT THE DOORS . . . The time is short"
- 1943 "The beginning of the final war is dangerously near"
- 1944 "The end of the world arrangement is now near"
- 1946* (or before) "Armageddon . . . should come sometime before 1972"
- 1946 "The final end draws near"
- 1950 "Jehovah's time has come to settle definitely the issue"
- 1953* "1954 could well be 'The Year!' "
- 1955 "The war of Armageddon is nearing its breakingout point"
- 1966 "A climax of man's history is at the door!"
- 1969 "There is only a short time left"

On the basis of past pronouncements, can the Watchtower Society be trusted as an accurate source of prophetic understanding?

APPENDIX IS TIME RUNNING OUT FOR THE WITNESSES?

(Written in December 1975)

Since this book was first published in October 1972, this writer has followed with interest what has taken place among the Jehovah's Witnesses. Witness growth hit new peaks with 297,872 baptisms reported in 1974, and 295,073 in 1975. Certainly, the belief that 6,000 years of human history would end in 1975 and that Armageddon could also occur then (or sooner), spurred the Witnesses on to increased activity and brought thousands of new converts into the movement. How are these teachings concerning Bible chronology and Armageddon viewed at present? This Appendix surveys these subjects and gives observations on the latest developments.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 1975

On February 10, 1975, Society vice-president F. W. Franz addressed over 20,000 Witnesses in the Los Angeles Sports Arena. Thousands of others were linked by radio hookup to hear the message in other California locations. This was only one of a number of similar meetings held around the world to give the Society's latest information on the significance of 1975. It was obvious from what Mr. Franz said that the hopes for 1975 among many Witnesses were very high. "Faced with an anticipated Sept. 5 deadline and growing expectations among many Witnesses," observed John Dart, "F. W. Franz, the sect's 81-year-old chief 'theologian,' has put the damper on specific references to the war to end all wars."¹

In his speech, "Time in Which We Are Now Interested," Franz stated that 6,000 years of human history would definitely end at sundown, September 5, 1975, according to the lunar calendar.² He also disclosed what many Witnesses around the world were expecting in 1975.

Now [in] our inquiries around the world with brothers as to what they're expecting to occur between now and the end of 1975, it is revealed, that some, are very sanguine about matters in the near future, and they're expecting the great tribulation to occur and the destruction of Babylon the Great and the annihilation of all the political systems of this world and then the binding of Satan and his demons and their abyssing to occur before this year is ended. This year 1975. And immediately thereafter the thousand year reign of the Lord Jesus Christ to begin. So they expect a great deal. And they're venting their views to their brothers and sisters in the congregations and raising their expectations very, very high indeed. Well now, we're not saying that by the end of this year 1975 all these things cannot take place. That God

¹ John Dart, "The End is Near . . . Maybe," *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1975, Part 2, p. 1.

² F. W. Franz, Los Angeles Sports Arena, February 10, 1975 (tape recording). To announce that 6,000 years were certain to run out on September 5, 1975 would indicate that the problems of chronology mentioned in the August 15, 1968 *Watchtower* (pp. 499, 500) and in the article on "Abraham" in *Aid to Bible Understanding* (p. 23, where it is stated that an adjustment would place Adam's creation date as 4027 rather than 4026 B.C.E.) have been solved. The present writer is amazed at the Witnesses' certainty on such matters when the finest Bible scholars in the world have rejected the entire scheme of dating Adam's creation as being impossible on the basis of the available evidence.

cannot bring all these things about! He can! He's almighty. And this omnipotent One can bring this about in a hurry if He wants to do so. But, in view of what the Scriptures inform us, are we warranted in expecting so much to occur by September 5, 1975? . . .³

Franz went on to explain that there was a time interval between Adam's creation and Eve's, and that the sixth creative day ended only after Eve's creation. So while September 5, 1975, would mark the end of 6,000 years of man's existence, it did not mean that mankind would be 6,000 years into the seventh day. This view was also presented in the October 1, 1975 *Watchtower*. If this time interval were one month, then things could terminate in October, if two months, November, and so on. Franz stated, "Well, since that is the case, then we do not necessarily have to insist or even expect that everything is going to be through and over with by September 5 of this year. . . ."⁴

Reflecting the urgency which has characterized the movement for decades, Franz then cautioned his audience,

. . . After September 5, things could happen, and it looks very likely they're going to happen, according to the way that affairs are going in the world

. . . So it could come, quickly, within a short time after the terminal day of the lunar year 1975. And we should not jump to wrong decisions on that account and say, well, the time after September 5, 1975 is indefinitely long and so it will allow for me to realize my human aspirations, getting married and raising a family — kids; or, going to college for a few years and learning engineering and finding a fine position as an engineer . . . or some other prominent, fine paying job. No! The time does not allow for that dear friends Evidently there is not much time left⁵

So, according to current Watchtower speculation, Armageddon and the millennial reign of Christ could take place almost immediately — or at some time during the next few years.

SPECULATION ON 1975

In response to the question "What happened to previous

³ F. W. Franz tape.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

predictions concerning 1975?" the dedicated Witness today will usually deny that anything definite was predicted or believed. Witness Jim Heidt is quoted in the February 14, 1975 *Los Angeles Times* as saying that "it was only the immature brothers and sisters reading between the lines who felt that Armageddon was definitely predicted for 1975."⁶ From the available evidence it would seem that a great number of Witnesses were "immature" and that these were the ones who contacted potential converts and talked with evangelical Christians. They also seemed to be the ones who were frequently quoted in the news media.

John Dart reported that "the Brooklyn-headquartered Watchtower Society, burned by past erroneous prophecies, maintains that it never has said flatly that 1975 was going to be IT," and then concluded, "But in fact the society has left its followers little else to conclude."⁷ As with past "erroneous prophecies" The Witness leadership is placing blame for inflated hopes and speculation concerning 1975 on the average Jehovah's Witness. In addition to the statements by Heidt and Franz, the *Watchtower* of October 15, 1974, claimed that the publications of the Jehovah's Witnesses "have never said that the world's end would come then [1975]," and then added, "Nevertheless, there has been considerable individual speculation on the matter." What is not stated is that the source of the "individual speculation" was the Society and its publications.⁸

Contacts with Jehovah's Witnesses and those who have left the movement in the past few years verified the importance that they attached to 1975 and their expectation that Armageddon would take place that year or even before. On three occasions during 1974, in contacts from various parts of the United States (California, Nevada and Hawaii), it was learned from teachers and other sources that Witness parents were so sure Armageddon would come during 1975 at the latest, that they removed their children from school, giving this belief as the reason.

Recent conversations with Jehovah's Witnesses have been interesting. When one was asked what had happened to

⁶ Dart, p. 5.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸ P. 635.

Armageddon as previously predicted, the answer given was, "1975 is not over yet!" Another indicated that there was still almost a year available.

What did Witnesses believe and teach concerning 1975, according to newspaper reports? Here are a few representative articles. Under the headline, "Witnesses Give World Five Years at the Most," the Religion Editor of the *Arizona Republic* (August 24, 1969) presented an interview with Witness Erroll Burton.

Within months, or at the most five years, the end of the world as we have known it will occur and a thousand-year reign of Jesus will begin [italics mine].

This is the view of the approximately 400,000-member [in the USA] sect calling itself Jehovah's Witnesses.

According to Erroll Burton, Paradise Valley Unit of Jehovah's Witnesses, the prediction is based on the estimate that 1975 will mark the end of 6,000 years since the time of Adam and Eve, and that according to scripture, is when Armageddon will occur (Rev. 16:16)

The March 19, 1970 issue of the English newspaper, *Daily Mail*, reported the story of how a Witness couple "refused permission for their newly born son to have a life-saving blood transfusion," but that their refusal was overturned by the magistrates at an emergency court hearing, and the transfusion was given. The parents held those responsible for the transfusion as "guilty of a grave sin." The article then went on to state: "The couple, who have been Witnesses for two years, believe that Armageddon—judgment day—will come before 1975. They said: 'If the baby died, he would have been resurrected and reunited with us after Armageddon.'" The *Evening Mail* of May 7, 1971, carried an article on the experiences of former Witnesses, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Goldvag who had left the movement in 1969. Mrs. Goldvag explained: "We want to prevent other people from going through the misery we have had. Missionaries are working hard in Birmingham to recruit more into the faith before 1975—the expected date of Armageddon."

"Witnesses Take the Plunge For Eternity" was the headline of the article which appeared in the July 25, 1973 *Los Angeles Times*. Reported Bella Stumbo covered the story of the baptismal service at the five-day Assembly at Dodger Stadium and interviewed some ladies waiting to be baptized:

But the plain fact is that doomsday is at hand, said Mrs. McGuire, 26, and those who haven't been baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses are going to perish.

The occasion, she elaborated, is called Armageddon and it is prophesied in the holy scriptures. By all the best Witness reckoning, its due in two to three years.

Rev. Frank Triggs of the Cerritos First Assembly of God Church reported that "the leader of a Jehovah's Witness congregation in Southern California was so convinced that Oct. 31, 1974, was the last possible date for Armageddon that he declared he would sell his home for a few dollars on Oct. 30."⁹

The following experience is taken from a written account by Eric Grieshaber and his wife Jean who resigned from the Jehovah's Witnesses on October 24, 1974.

As the time for Armageddon drew closer, "the friends" began selling their homes, campers and motorcycles. Many gave up good paying jobs and took janitorial work in order to have more time for service.

The year 1973 was an exciting one as we prepared for Armageddon. One of our friends who had left the area wrote and asked permission to stay with us in order to "ride out Armageddon" with the congregation. Two other families that moved to where the "need was greater" came back to our congregation to await Armageddon. We all knew that sometime around October 1, 1974 the last year of mankind's 6,000 years of existence on earth would begin and soon Jesus Christ would take his peaceful rule over the earth.

That many Witnesses did quit their jobs in anticipation of the soon advent of Armageddon is verified in the Witnesses' May 1974 issue of *Kingdom Ministry*:

Reports are heard of brothers selling their homes and property and planning to finish out the rest of their days in this old system in the pioneer service. Certainly this is a fine way to spend the short time remaining before the wicked world's end.

Another significant account dealing with Witness expectations for 1975 appeared in the January 1975 issue of the *Evangelical Times*, published in London. The article, "Will the World End This Year?" was written by Richard E. Cotton (in consultation with ex-Witness George Terry). Mr. Cotton had left the Witnesses after eighteen years. Only a portion of the article is reproduced here.

⁹ Dart, p. 1.

The year 1975 has dawned, and with it comes the question: Could this be the year of Nemesis, of retribution, for Jehovah's Witnesses? Could it be the year of yet another dashed hope?

To many of the rank and file within the Watchtower Movement, 1975 has meant only one thing — the long awaited year of Divine Wrath. The time of judgment, when God would destroy the wicked and restore this old earth to a paradise state. Eternal life in the restored earth has been the hope of most Jehovah's Witnesses.

For almost ten years 1975 has hung over the heads of the faithful like a chronological carrot. True, very little has been written about it in official Watchtower publications, but a great deal has been said at grassroot level. And when Witnesses are taught to believe that God is using the Watchtower organisation to the total exclusion of all other churches or bodies (for this is their claim) it only requires a hint of a date to begin a wave of speculation. This is very understandable in a group maintaining that we are living at the very end of the Bible's "time of the end".

A date like 1975 had a fine apocalyptic ring when it was still ten years or so ahead. In 1966 a publication called *Life Everlasting — in Freedom of the Sons of God* announced that independent research into Bible chronology had established that 6,000 years of human history would come to an end in the autumn of 1975. As Jehovah's Witnesses believe that there will be a millenium to complete a divine cycle of 7,000 years, it was clear that the long awaited period would begin around the autumn of 1975.

When the date was made public 1966, the present writer was a Witness and was able to see what happened. Very little apart from that statement was ever published, but things began to be said and great was the speculation. No doubt many can recall the famous football star who stated on television that the Bible taught that the end would come in 1975. He was so certain of this, viewers were told, that if the expected results did not materialise, he would throw his Bible away.

In the months and years that followed overseers and visiting speakers of the cult were known to speak to the congregation about the "short time left". Some of the more convinced would total up the number of days to October 1975. When told by indignant householders, "You people are always round at our doors," one full time worker would answer: "We shall not be calling many more times".

Bible Studies with the unconverted were limited to a certain number of weeks because of the nearness of the end. Some Witnesses never bothered to increase their mortgage repayments as interest rates shot upwards. They were hoping for a permanent settlement on the amount outstanding in 1975. Some were so convinced the world was on its last legs that they speculated the system could not last until 1975.

D.I.Y. fans in the movement were known to remark in the early '70s that the house would not need repainting ever again. There was even the

JW in need of surgery who preferred to live with the condition until the healing rays of the Millenium restored all to perfect health.

How many Witnesses, we wonder, will be suffering from loss of memory this year about their expressed hopes of only a year or so back? But these things were said and no amount of forgetting can unsay them.

To add to the fires of speculation some Witnesses got hold of typed copies of a talk which it was claimed was given by one of the Watchtower Directors in some far away country. This explosive material indicated that soon calamities and even flesh-consuming plagues of a cosmic nature would befall the world of men. Yet members of the Watchtower Movement would be untouched by these manifestations of divine anger.

How sure everyone seemed. Yet now 1975 is here and the dilemma of the Witnesses continues to increase

But this is not all. Other problems now arise for the Witnesses' world view. They no longer have the luxury of being able to extend their time of waiting for still further years. For decades now the publications have emphasised that the second coming or presence of our Lord began in the year 1914. Using this year as a chronological anchor for the plan of the "last days", they confidently state ("from" Matt. 24:34) that in less than the passing of one human generation from 1914 all will be completed.

The honest observer may well be asking what many thinking JWs are asking. How long is a generation? From 1914 to 1975 is 61 years, a rather long time. If we think in terms of 40 years as a reasonable and scriptural figure then the cult has lost out. Even if we stretch the post - 1914 period to its full limit by giving it a full biblical "threescore years and ten", we still find problems.

As stated before, the Movement stresses that it is the generation that is alive and witnessed 1914 that will still be around when the final end comes. So we are dealing with a time period years less than a full 70 years.

Time is no longer on the side of the Watchtower. Their prophetic hourglass is empty, but for a few grains of sand.

As the critical year progresses, it may well be that pressure will be eased by diversionary tactics. We do not doubt the ability of the "men at the top" to make fresh calculations for the future, but the fact remains that this year may well be a critical one for the movement.¹⁰

¹⁰ The *Evangelical Times* address is: *Evangelical Times*, Elephant and Castle, London, S.E.1.

THE ADAM AND EVE "GAP"

According to Watchtower publications and Witness vice-president F. W. Franz, the long-awaited Battle of Armageddon and the peaceful reign of Jesus Christ are delayed only by the time interval between Adam and Eve's creation. According to Witness materials, how long was this interval? Let us examine and compare Witness publications in answer to the question.

The *Watchtower* of October 1, 1975, in agreement with Mr. Franz's speech at the Sports Arena, stated: "It [the Bible] shows a time lapse between the creation of Adam and that of his wife, Eve. During that time, God had Adam name the animals. Whether that period amounted to weeks or months or years [italics mine], we do not know."¹¹ Compare this speculation, with what was stated in *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1968: ". . . After his creation Adam lived some time during the 'sixth day' . . . And yet the end of that sixth creative 'day' could end within the same Gregorian calendar year of Adam's creation. It may involve only a difference of weeks or months, not years" [italics mine].¹² This second and earlier statement is in agreement with what had been published and stated by the Society leadership for years.

Was there anything else stated or published that would cause Witnesses to conclude that the end of the sixth creative day paralleled the beginning of the seventh day, or that the time interval was minimal, at the most less than a year? The answer is yes.

In the report on the "God's Sons of Liberty" District Assemblies, held in 1966, the *Watchtower* commented on the response to the release of the new book *Life Everlasting — in Freedom of the Sons of God*.

Immediately its contents were examined. It did not take the brothers very long to find the chart beginning on page 31, showing that 6,000 years of man's existence end in 1975. Discussion of 1975 overshadowed about everything else. "The new book compels us to realize that

¹¹ P. 579.

¹² P. 499. Page 500 states: "So the lapse of time between Adam's creation and the end of the sixth creative day, though unknown, was a comparatively short period of time."

Armageddon is, in fact, very close indeed," said one conventioner. Surely it was one of the outstanding blessings to be carried home!¹³

Why had 1975 become so important in 1966, when a chronology which agreed with it had already been published in 1963 in *All Scripture is Inspired of God and Beneficial*? Why had the 1963 publication not stirred the same response? Because this chronology was accompanied with the statement, "It does no good to use Bible chronology for speculating on dates that are still future in the stream of time."¹⁴ The significance of the 1966 publication was that chronology *was* used for speculation on dates that are future in the stream of time. The stress in *Life Everlasting — in Freedom of the Sons of God* was that man's creation and the end of the sixth day were probably parallel to the beginning of the seventh. This book stated:

According to this trustworthy Bible chronology six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 C.E. . . .

How appropriate it would be for Jehovah God to make of this coming seventh period of a thousand years a sabbath period of rest and release . . . It would not be by mere chance or accident but would be according to the loving purpose of Jehovah God for the reign of Jesus Christ, the "Lord of the Sabbath," to run parallel with the seventh millennium of man's existence.¹⁵

It is obvious that in this statement there is no view of a time interval of years between Adam and Eve's creation. While the report on the Baltimore Assembly mentions that Mr. Franz cautioned the brethren, "Don't any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975," it was Mr. Franz himself, as the same report stated, who "went into some length showing the feasibility of the date 4026 B.C. as being the beginning of God's rest day."¹⁶ (This is the same date assigned to Adam and Eve's creation.)

The new emphasis of the 1966 book on the year 1975 is clearly reiterated in the *Awake!* of October 8, 1966.

¹³ October 15, 1966, pp. 628, 629.

¹⁴ P. 286.

¹⁵ Pp. 29, 30.

¹⁶ *The Watchtower*, October 15, 1966, p. 631.

*Does God's rest day parallel the time man has been on earth since his creation? Apparently so. From the most reliable investigations of Bible chronology, harmonizing with many accepted dates of secular history, we find that Adam was created in the autumn of the year 4026 B.C. Sometime in that same year Eve could well have been created, directly after which God's rest day commenced. In what year, then, would the first 6,000 years of man's existence and also the first 6,000 years of God's rest day come to an end? The year 1975 [italics mine].*¹⁷

The Watchtower of May 1, 1968, stated:

. . . . It is logical that he would create Eve soon after Adam, perhaps just a few weeks or months later in the same year, 4026 B.C.E. After her creation, God's rest day, the seventh period, immediately followed.

Therefore, God's seventh day and the time man has been on earth apparently run parallel. To calculate where man is in the stream of time relative to God's seventh day of 7,000 years, we need to determine how long a time has elapsed from the year of Adam and Eve's creation in 4026 B.C.E. . . . Thus, eight years remain to account for a full 6,000 years of the seventh day. Eight years from the autumn of 1967 would bring us to the autumn of 1975, fully 6,000 years into God's seventh day, his rest day [italics mine].¹⁸

The *Awake!* of October 8, 1968 stated that "according to reliable Bible chronology, Adam and Eve [italics mine] were created in 4026 B.C."¹⁹

The Jehovah's Witnesses continued to teach that Adam and Eve were both created in the calendar year 4026 B.C.E. and that the seventh day commenced in that same year. For example, Genesis 5:3 states that "Adam lived on for a hundred and thirty years. Then he became father to a son in his likeness, in his image, and called his name Seth" (NWT). In the article on "Eve" in *Aid to Bible Understanding*, the reader is told: "At the age of 130 another son was born to her. Eve called his name Seth. . . ." ²⁰ Certainly if Adam and Eve were both 130 years of age at Seth's birth, the time gap between their creation could not have been lengthy. And finally, in the 1974 publication, *God's "Eternal Purpose" Now Triumphant for Man's Good*, there is a

¹⁷ P. 19.

¹⁸ P. 271.

¹⁹ P. 14.

²⁰ (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1969), p. 538.

bold heading which states, " 'EVENING' OF SEVENTH CREATIVE 'DAY' BEGINS, 4026 B.C.E."²¹ If this date was just speculation, or a guess, it should not have been used as a major division of the book.

In conclusion, it is obvious that if one takes Witness statements and publications seriously—although there have been attempts recently to gain years of time — they have limited the time available before Armageddon occurs to less than a year.

ARE THE GENESIS DAYS 7,000 YEARS LONG?

In agreement with C. T. Russell the Witnesses teach that the Genesis "days" are 7,000-year periods, not 24-hour days. If it could be shown that these days were not 7,000 years long, but days of approximately 24 hours, the current Witness speculation as to the time interval between Adam and Eve's creation would no longer be available, for both would have been created during one solar day.

It is not this writer's intention to give a lengthy development of this point here. It is true as Dr. Raymond Surburg stated after examining several views,

Despite these many variant ideas concerning the meaning of *yom* [day], there is an impressive amount of evidence favoring the view that the "days" referred to in connection with the creative activity of God were not long periods but solar days of approximately 24 hours.²² [For a brief presentation of some of the evidence mentioned by Surburg, see Appendix E.]

CONCLUSION

This Appendix asks the question, "Is time running out for the Witnesses?" The answer is yes. Or more accurately, it could be said that time has already run out. It is also obvious that the speculation which has characterized the history of this movement since its inception still continues.

When in his Sports Arena address, F. W. Franz cautioned his audience not to come to wrong conclusions concerning the time

²¹ P. 51.

²² "In the Beginning God Created," Chapter 2 of *Darwin, Evolution and Creation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959, p. 59).

available — to realize their human aspirations of marriage, family, education and job — he reminded this writer of the similar instructions that were given by the Witness leadership during World War II. For example, in the summer of 1941, J. F. Rutherford questioned the wisdom of marrying because of the closeness of Armageddon and the Millennial Kingdom. He asked, "Why, then, should a man who has the prospect before him of being of the great multitude now tie himself up to a stack of bones and a hank of hair?"²³ This statement agreed with the book *Children* which was also released in 1941.²⁴ How close was Armageddon according to the *Watchtower* magazine of September 15, 1941? It was reported that the book *Children* (distributed to children at the St. Louis convention) was "the Lord's provided instrument for most effective work in the remaining months before Armageddon [italics mine]."²⁵ Certainly the piper's tune has not changed!

²³ *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1941, p. 287.

²⁴ See p. 366.

²⁵ p. 288.